

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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September 11, 1998

To: Delta Protection Commission
From: Lori Clamurro, Delta Protection Commission Staff
Subject: Status of Grasslands Bypass Project Monitoring Activities

Background on the Grasslands Bypass Project

The Grasslands Bypass Project was approved in 1995, when the Bureau of Reclamation signed an agreement with the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority allowing the northern 28-mile portion of the San Luis Drain to be re-opened for a two-year trial period; the project has been extended until September of 2001, for a total of five years. The purpose of the Grasslands Bypass Project is to route agricultural drain water from the Drainage Problem Area in the western San Joaquin Valley around state and federal wildlife habitat areas in Mud and Salt Sloughs. The drain water that used to flow through these areas now flows into the existing portion of the San Luis Drain, where it is released into Mud Slough downstream of the habitat areas. From there, it flows into the San Joaquin River and north into the Delta.

The Grasslands Bypass Project includes a monitoring component, carried out by the San Francisco Estuary Institute, which measures the amount of selenium, salt, and boron in the waterways at various locations. This program is funded by the dischargers, Grassland Area Farmers. The monitoring program includes a Drainage Incentive Fee for any exceedances of selenium discharges into Mud Slough, to be paid by the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority. The funds collected from the Fee are used to reduce the adverse impacts associated with the Grasslands Bypass Project.

Summary of First Year Activities

The first year of the monitoring program covered October 1996 through September 1997. The monitoring results from that period are summarized in the first chart accompanying this report. For the months of January 1997 through June 1997, when selenium discharges exceeded the established load values, the Incentive Fee assessments were as follows: \$2,800 each for January, April, and May; and \$700 each for February, March, and June. A \$50,000 fee was also assessed for the year because the annual total of discharges exceeded the established annual load value by 6.6%. In total, \$60,500 in Drainage Incentive Fees were collected for the first year of the monitoring program.

During the first year of the monitoring program, there were found to be no significant adverse impacts associated with the agricultural drainage from the Drainage Problem Area, and

thus no mitigation projects associated with the Grasslands Bypass Project. However, the \$60,500 collected in Drainage Incentive Fees for the first year of the program is being used for a type of competitive grant process to fund projects which would reduce the effects of drainage within the watershed area. Currently, there are 18 projects being considered. Examples include: the retirement of grazing land in the upper watershed; participation in the Tradeable Discharge Program; supplemental monitoring in the upper watershed; and grower outreach. Penny Howard, Bureau of Reclamation, says that the process is ongoing; to date, no projects have been funded. The Oversight Committee for the Grasslands Bypass Project will determine which projects are to be funded at its next meeting, December 8, 1998.

Summary of Second Year Activities to Date

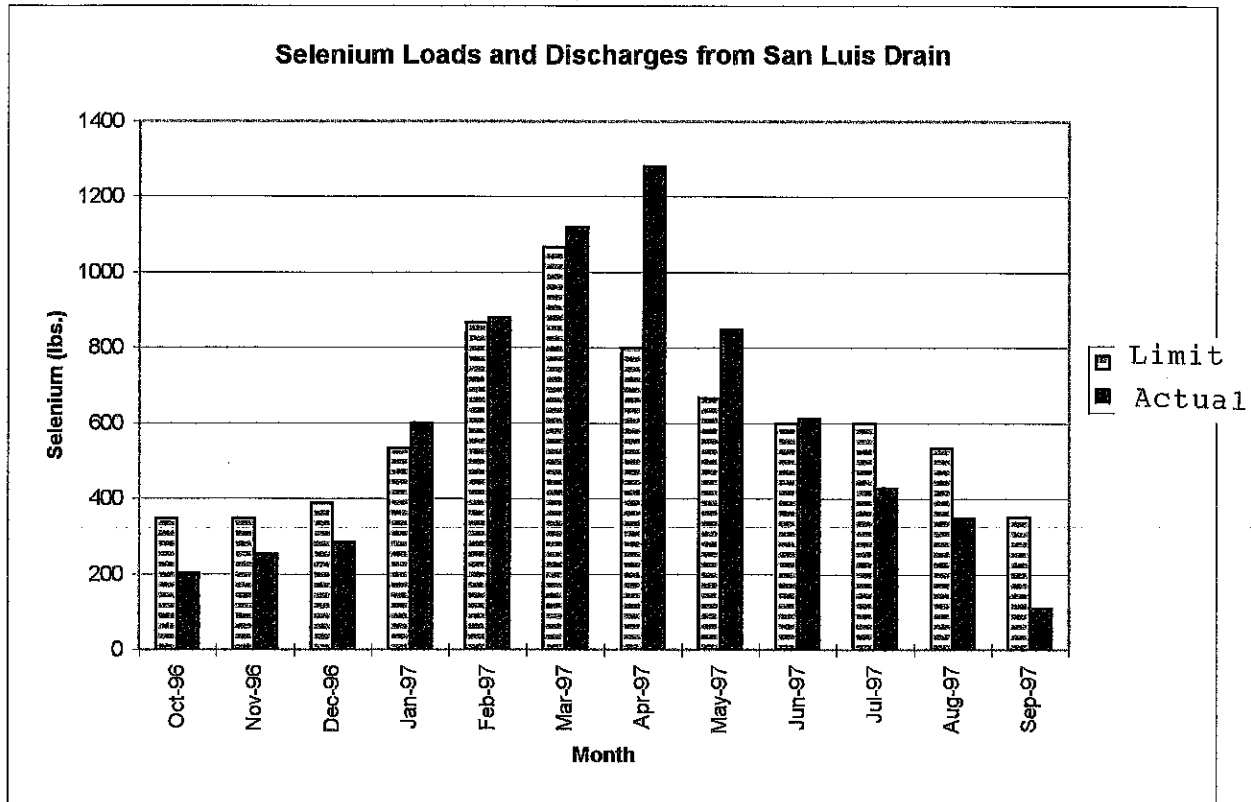
The second year of the monitoring program began in October 1997 and will end in September 1998. The most recent monthly monitoring report summarizes the monitoring findings through June 1998. As the second chart included in this report shows, selenium discharges were found to be in compliance with the established selenium load values for the months of October 1997 through January 1998. In February through June of 1998, the selenium discharged was found to be in exceedance of selenium load values. It is unknown at this time how much of a Drainage Incentive Fee will be assessed on these exceedances, because it is being recommended that the February 1998 Storm Event be classified as "unforeseeable/uncontrollable".

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board considered and adopted revised waste discharge requirements for the Grasslands Bypass Project at its Friday, July 24 meeting. The new selenium load values adopted as part of the waste discharge are listed below (these differ from the waste discharge requirements from the first two years of the project in that for the months of January through August, selenium load limits are reduced yearly; for the months of September through December, selenium load limits remain constant from year to year). These new waste discharge requirements will be in effect for the remainder of the five-year project terminating in September 2001 absent the adoption of another project.

SELENIUM LOAD LIMITS				
in pounds				
Month	Water Year 1998	Water Year 1999	Water Year 2000	ater Year 2001
October		348	348	348
November		348	348	348
December		389	389	389
January		506	479	453
February		823	779	736
March		1013	959	906
April		759	719	679
May		633	599	566
June		569	539	509
July		569	539	509
August	533	506	480	453
September	350	350	350	350
Total Annual Load	N/A	6327	5994	5661

First Year of Monitoring Activities

<u>Month</u>	<u>Load Value (lbs.)</u>	<u>Load Discharge (lbs.)</u>	<u>Exceedance Amount</u>
Oct-96	348	202	IN COMPLIANCE
Nov-96	348	252	IN COMPLIANCE
Dec-96	389	285	IN COMPLIANCE
Jan-97	533	599	12%
Feb-97	866	878	1%
Mar-97	1066	1119	5%
Apr-97	799	1280	60%
May-97	666	849	27%
Jun-97	599	611	2%
Jul-97	599	428	IN COMPLIANCE
Aug-97	533	348	IN COMPLIANCE
Sep-97	350	109	IN COMPLIANCE



Second Year of Monitoring Activities

<u>Month</u>	<u>Load Value (lbs.)</u>	<u>Load Discharge (lbs.)</u>	<u>Exceedance Amount</u>
Oct-97	348	248	IN COMPLIANCE
Nov-97	348	207	IN COMPLIANCE
Dec-97	389	178	IN COMPLIANCE
Jan-98	533	335	IN COMPLIANCE
Feb-98	866	965	11%
Mar-98	1066	1600	50%
Apr-98	799	1554	94%
May-98	666	1371	106%
Jun-98	599	807	35%
Jul-98	599		
Aug-98	533		
Sep-98	350		

